

MEETING MINUTES

Finance Committee

March 2, 2009

CALL TO ORDER

Time – 7:00 P.M.

Members in attendance: Chairman Joanne F. Marden, Tim Felter, Mary O'Donoghue, S. Jon Stumpf, Cindy Milne, Richard T. Howe and Mark Merritt.

Also present: Anthony J. Torrasi, Finance Director

MINUTES APPROVAL

Richard Howe moved and Tim Felter seconded to approve the Tri-board Meeting minutes of February 9, 2009. The motion passed unanimously with changes 7-0.

Tim Felter moved and Mark Merritt seconded to approve the Regular Finance Committee Meeting minutes of February 9, 2009. Prior to voting, Mr. Stumpf asked Mr. Torrasi to request further information from the DPW relative to snow removal costs in neighboring communities for improved comparison analyses. A brief discussion ensued regarding possible override items. The motion passed unanimously 7-0.

TRANSFER REQUEST

Mr. Torrasi presented a transfer request in the amount of \$28,000. to Ms. Marden for General Government-Other Expenses. It was noted the amount requested was due to an increase in veterans' benefits. Committee members commended the work of Veteran Services Director Mike Burke for doing the job he was hired to do, which was to provide outreach to Andover's veterans. Cindy Milne moved and Tim Felter seconded to approve the transfer request in the amount of \$28,000. The motion passed unanimously 7-0.

WORK SESSION DISCUSSION ON BUDGET ISSUES

The Committee entered into a lengthy discussion with regard to what to expect with the FY2010 School Budget. Mr. Stumpf reported that he requested the following information of the School Business Manager, David Keniston: retiree savings amount, status on Other Expenses number, SPED transportation costs, Circuit Breaker reimbursements, and Out-Of-District tuition costs. It was noted that SPED costs are difficult to manage due mostly to state mandates. Others noted the importance of questioning state legislators regarding SPED costs. Ms. Marden suggested funding the SPED budget by financial incentives rather than funds taken directly out of the budget. Some committee members questioned whether Andover was spending more on SPED than what is required.

The following issues regarding fees were also discussed:

- Are current fees covering costs?
- Fees for school rentals to be paid from DCS and AYS budgets or by users?
- Cemetery fees

- Town House rental fees

The Committee directed Mr. Torrisi to check with Plant & Facilities as to whether the Town House fees have increased.

Andover resident Mary Carbone voiced concern over the proposed cost saving initiative of turning off street lights in cul-de-sacs. She stated more focus should be on salary line items in the budget adding that there should be personnel cuts across the board.

Committee members agreed that it should be the goal of the Finance Committee to ask departments to offer the same services while lowering costs.

Discussion regarding various budget items was followed with a proposal by Mr. Howe that the Finance Committee draft a letter to state legislators listing budget issues most important to the Town. Mr. Howe agreed to draft the letter.

Mr. Howe raised concern over the proposed CIP project of replacing the Ballardvale Fire Station adding that he would like to see further investigation into the Town having two stations rather than three. Discussion followed. Consensus was that this topic should not be discussed during the budget process but at the time the project is submitted.

NEXT MEETING

Joint Board Meeting
Wednesday, March 25, 2009
7:00 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT – 9:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carolyn Lynch
Recording Secretary